



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE BENEFIT FEATURES OF AMERICAN TRADES UNIONS.

SO little being known of the means other than strikes which our American labor organizations are using to elevate and help their members, a circular letter of eighteen comprehensive questions was sent out in the fall of 1886, to the secretaries of the forty-four national and international trades unions enumerated in the official publications of some of the unions.¹

Fourteen labor organizations with 145,915 members in the United States gave fairly complete returns. Seven with about 100,000 members reported either that the benefit features, though in most cases important, were entirely under the control of the local branches which had not furnished returns to the national secretary, or that the returns could not be published. A few facts were also gathered relative to the benefits—entirely local in character, except a death benefit—of the 700,000 to 900,000 members of the Knights of Labor. From many unions it was impossible to secure returns for 1886. In those cases returns for 1885 are given. The unions that did report, however, gave information which may justify a short article.

It must be borne in mind that the very recent development of strong labor organizations on American soil has not given time for the growth of those benevolent features which are such a marked characteristic of the English unions and of such effectiveness in relieving distress and assisting to obtain work. Strikes are the almost inevitable attendant of the birth of labor organizations. Sick, funeral, accident, out-of-work and traveling benefits, *etc.*, come later. Those American unions which now possess these features did not have them at first, while those unions which now have none will almost surely be led to adopt ere long friendly features. Many of their leaders have

¹ See *The Carpenter*, September, 1886, and *The Cigar-makers' Official Journal*, July, 1886. A list (corrected to date) of most of the unions is given in every number of *The Labor Leader*, Boston, Mass.

in their correspondence with the writer directly testified to this. Again, the migratory character of American workmen has often taken them to places where there were no local divisions of the union to which they belonged. With the rapid extension of our trades unions which, according to competent judges, now number, outside the Knights of Labor, considerably over half a million men, and with the more settled habits of our employees, the great obstacles to the growth of benefit features are disappearing. Death benefits may continue largely the province of the present insurance companies; but where these companies refuse to assume the extra risks of such hazardous employments as mining and railroading, the trades societies are under imperative obligations to insure their members. The same may be said of accident benefits. Assistance to those out of work from any good cause and to those unable to travel in search of work, or to the sick,—the so-called out-of-work, travelling, and sick benefits,—can only be given by societies whose members know each other individually, work by each other's side, and are personally interested in detecting all "shamming" which would deplete the common funds.

We hear much nowadays of competitive price and just price, as if they were opposed to one another. It can easily be shown, the writer believes, that they are as nearly identical as can be conceived, provided—and that is the vital point—that there is any such thing practicable in the economic life of to-day as perfectly free competition. To realize it, capital must be perfectly mobile, and the laborer must be intelligent enough to know where he can improve his condition; he must have the ability and the will to seek that place and must be free from the necessity, in order to keep starvation from the door, of offering his services at cut-throat or bare subsistence prices to the first employer willing to give him work. How far this ideal state of the old economist is from the actual facts of life we all know. A study then of the various benevolent features of labor organizations is a study of the crutches, often most essential to the lame, by which the poor or ignorant or unfortunate wage-earner may obtain the advantages of fair com-

petition on somewhat equal terms with his fellow-workmen and with his employer.

One of the most advanced in its benefit features of our unions is the *Cigar-makers' International Union of America*, whose membership grew from 1016 in September, 1877, to 1400 in September, 1883, and 25,789 in 262 unions December 1, 1886. It is called international because it includes Canada as well as the United States. In 1879 the system of relief funds was adopted. In the following six years, ending September 1, 1885, there was spent :

Assistance to travelling cigar-makers . . .	\$126,885.27
Sick benefit	84,414.52
Death benefit	10,613.25
Strike benefit	310,657.26
	<hr/>
	\$532,570.30

The president estimates that, adding to these the amounts raised by voluntary subscriptions and local assessments, the aggregate expenditure exceeded \$650,000. During the three months of September, October, and November, 1886, the national organization spent \$24,671.75 for travelling, sick, and death benefits, and only \$7961.81, or twenty-four per cent of the total expenditures, for strikes. If, as is probable, this was a fair sample of the year's expenditure, there was spent on benefit features about \$98,000 in 1887, and for strikes about \$32,000.

These benefits are carefully guarded. No strike can be entered upon with the hope of help from the rest of the order, without first being approved by the executive body of the national order ; and if the proposed strike is to involve more than twenty-five men, it must be approved, after careful examination of all the facts, by a two-thirds majority of all the votes cast in all the local unions of the entire order. A wiser, more conservative measure could not be devised. To avoid the temptation of long-continued strikes it is provided that the relief for the first sixteen weeks shall be four dollars per week, for the following eight weeks three dollars per week, and then two dollars per

week until the strike is concluded. These munificent sums can hardly be said to encourage idleness. The travelling benefit is guarded as follows. Any one who has been a member in good standing for six months and is desirous of seeking employment elsewhere is entitled to a loan sufficient for transportation by the cheapest route to the nearest union in any direction that he desires to travel, and to a loan of fifty cents besides; but the aggregate loans must not exceed twenty dollars, or twelve dollars at any one time. These loans must be repaid by a weekly payment of ten per cent of his weekly wages to the officer appointed for the purpose in the union to which he goes, until the debt is cancelled. This tends to prevent reckless or idle travelling on the union's funds. The sick fund is guarded with equal care. A sick member is entitled to five dollars per week from the time of notifying the proper officer, provided his sickness or inability shall last at least seven days, and shall not have been caused by intemperance, debauchery, or other immoral conduct. But if the sickness extend beyond the eighth week, the relief then becomes three dollars per week. No relief is given in any one year after a second eight weeks' sickness. Fifty dollars is given to assist in the burial of all who have been members one year.

The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. This truly international organization embraced in December, 1885, a membership of 22,935 in all English-speaking lands, of which 1127 were in the United States. The benevolent features of the entire organization for 1885, are thus given in the twenty-sixth annual report :

The unemployed benefit	\$174,549.70
Sending members to situations	1,471.67
Tool benefit	7,498.50
Sick benefit	83,597.42
Accident benefit	8,750.00
Superannuation	12,909.70
Funeral benefit	14,568.20
Strikes	23,127.60
	<hr/>
	\$326,472.79

The amount spent in strikes was only seven per cent of the whole. The report of the twenty-five American branches is as follows :

Unemployed benefit	\$10,199.01
Travelling	52.94
Tool benefit	971.80
Sick benefit	3,017.81
Superannuation	273.46
Strikes	772.78
	<hr/>
	\$15,287.80

Here the strike fund was only five per cent of the whole. After a membership of six months one is entitled to the unemployed benefit of three dollars and fifty cents a week for the first twelve weeks whether the enforced idleness is continuous or not, and two dollars and ten cents a week for the next twelve weeks whether successive or not, making a total of sixty-seven dollars and ten cents in one year provided he is thrown out of work through a depression of trade. If he find work or has reason to expect that he can find work in another place, he is entitled to travelling expenses to the place of expected employment. No member can be sent to a distant locality, because he wishes to go there, when there is suitable employment for him nearer home ; and under no circumstances can any member be sent more than three hundred miles at the society's expense. Any officer of the society discharged for holding office is entitled to full wages, and the cost of removing his family to the place at which he obtains employment. The sick benefit for the first twenty-six weeks is four dollars and twenty cents per week, and two dollars and ten cents a week thereafter, as long as the sickness continues. The accident benefit to members totally disabled is seven dollars, and to those partly disabled three dollars and fifty cents. The superannuation benefit is two dollars and forty-five cents per week for life to those over fifty years of age, and through old age or infirmity incapable of earning more than half the usual amount of wages, and who have been members of the society for eighteen years. If they have

been members for twenty-five years, two dollars and eighty cents a week is given. Thirty-five dollars is allowed on the death of the wife of a member, and forty-nine on that of a member. Tools lost by fire, water, or theft to the extent of one dollar and forty cents are replaced according to their value. This benefit is paid in tools, not in money.

The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. The growth of this union the past year has been remarkable, as is indicated by the following table:

YEARS.	NO. UNIONS IN GOOD STANDING.				TOTAL MEMBERSHIP.
1881	12	.	.	.	2,042
1882	23	.	.	.	3,780
1883	26	.	.	.	3,293
1884	47	.	.	.	4,364
1885	80	.	.	.	5,789
1886, July	177	.	.	.	21,423
1886, December . . . . .	.	.	.	.	35,421

Of the total expenses of the local unions, July, 1885-July, 1886, which amounted to \$36,613.46, only \$1641.82, or about three and one-half per cent were for strikes. The benefits paid amounted in the aggregate to \$14,200. A funeral benefit of two hundred and fifty dollars is paid on the death of a member, and fifty dollars on the death of a wife. An accident benefit of two hundred and fifty dollars is given if a member is permanently disabled. Next year, in the opinion of the general secretary, P. J. McGuire, a loss of tools and superannuation benefit will be added.

The German American Typographia. This union, though numbering only nine hundred and fifty printers, has quite a developed system of benefits. Five dollars a week is paid to a sick member until he has received three hundred dollars; then three dollars a week until he has received two hundred dollars more. No further benefit can be received for ten years. A death benefit is paid of twenty-five dollars on the death of the wife of a member, and two hundred on that of a member. There is a travelling benefit of two cents a mile for the first two

hundred miles, and one cent a mile for any further distance on a continued journey. For those out of work for other causes than strikes, there is a benefit of five dollars a week, but not more than sixty dollars in one year. The strike benefit is seven dollars per week. In this, as in the previous cases considered, the annual dues cover all the benefits save the funeral benefits, for which assessments are provided. The funds spent for these various benefits, January–December 31, 1886, were as follows :

Sick benefit	. . . . .	\$3,077.95
Out of work	. . . . .	1,097.95
Travelling	. . . . .	588.91
Death	. . . . .	1,450.00
		<hr/>
		\$6,234.81
Strikes	. . . . .	2,604.79
		<hr/>
Total	. . . . .	\$8,839.60

The strike expenses were less than one-third of the whole. The general secretary writes of the amount spent for strikes : "This amount is exceptionally high, because we enforced the eight-hour rule on May 1, 1886."

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has not as many benefits as some organizations, but pays larger amounts. Nearly 5000 of the 20,000 members are enrolled in the relief department and subject to the special one dollar assessments necessary to pay to the friends of those thus enrolled funeral benefits of \$3000 and accident benefits of the same sum for the loss of arm, leg, or eyesight. Two hundred and sixty in March paid assessments of fifty cents, and carried a \$1500 accident insurance policy instead of a policy for \$3000. There were paid thus, by means of twelve assessments in the two months of January and February, 1887, accident and death benefits amounting to \$52,500. About \$200,000 were thus paid in 1886. Nothing was spent for strikes, which, as the public well knows, are not in much favor with this organization. Over \$2,000,000 have been paid since the organization of the order in 1864. The number of members in the brotherhood and in the relief department is rapidly growing.

The Locomotive Firemen. This organization, with its 17,000 members, pays \$1500 in case of death or total disability. From September 1, 1884, to September 1, 1885, the amount thus paid was \$147,000. From September 1, 1885, to September 1, 1886, \$228,000. The organization has never had a strike. The local branches assist the sick and those out of work, but in this, as in many other large labor organizations examined, the amount so spent does not come under the knowledge of the general secretary or president.

The Iron-moulders' Union. This organization of over twenty thousand members is, in the language of its president, protective and benevolent. It assists members in procuring employment and in receiving a fair remuneration for the same. It sees that apprentices are properly instructed in the trade. The sick benefit, from five dollars to seven dollars per week, is paid by the local branches. The exact sum expended the past year cannot be given. The central body gives one hundred dollars death benefit, and spent thus, in 1885-86, thirty-five thousand dollars. The local branches, also, give fifty to sixty dollars death benefit. These locals also give assistance to those too old or feeble to work. Fifty-six thousand dollars were spent in strikes, September, 1885, to September, 1886, by the central body, in addition to large contributions of the local branches.

The Furniture-workers. This organization of five thousand¹ members pays a sick benefit during the time of sickness of six dollars a week, and a death benefit of two hundred and fifty dollars for a member, and one hundred for a member's wife. Members can insure their tools by special assessments for amounts ranging from twenty-five to one hundred and fifty dollars. There are special assessments and initiation fees for these various benefits. Twelve hundred have subscribed to the tool insurance, which covers \$78,000 worth of tools; eight hundred to the sick benefit; and six hundred to the death benefit. During the two years ending July 1, 1886, there were paid:

¹ The numbers in many cases are only approximate, but the margin of error is probably not over ten per cent. The membership in most of these unions is rapidly growing, and the secretaries have often preferred to give round numbers, rather than to attempt the impossible by trying to give exact figures.

Death benefit	. . . . .	\$4,250
Sick benefit	. . . . .	5,858
Tool insurance	. . . . .	3,858
		<hr/>
		\$14,966
Strikes	. . . . .	4,000

During this period much assistance to needy members was given by the local branches, which also spent forty thousand dollars on the eight-hour strike.

The Horse-shoers' Union. This organization, numbering about five thousand, has a sick benefit of five dollars per week for three months, and a death benefit of about five hundred and fifty dollars. Fifty dollars is raised by the local union, and an assessment of ten cents per member is made on the entire national organization. Only about three hundred dollars was spent for strikes last year. The president writes :

We seldom have any strikes, and, when we do, they are very soon settled either for us or against us, but generally for us. We have twenty-eight local unions represented in the national union and all in a very prosperous condition, owing in a great measure to our conservatism.

The Boiler-makers, numbering over five thousand, have a sick benefit of five dollars per week, payable for twenty-six weeks of a year, and death and accident benefits of fifty dollars each. These sums are paid from the annual dues. The benefits during 1886 were about \$5000, and the strike expenses \$3500.

The Glass-workers, with a membership of five thousand pay a sick benefit of five dollars per week and a death benefit of from one hundred to three hundred dollars. Members on strikes receive six dollars per week. Money for the first two objects comes from special weekly assessments of those who wish to enter the relief department. Three thousand now pay these weekly sums, of from ten to one hundred and fifty dollars, as the needs of the order require.

The sick benefit for the year 1885-86, was	. . .	\$5,000
For the last three years it has averaged	. . .	4,000
Death benefit for the year 1885-86 was	. . .	6,100
For the last three years it has averaged	. . .	4,500

The strike expenses have been four times as large as the other benefits, being \$40,000 in 1885-86, and averaging \$38,000 in the last three years.

The Silk-hatters' Union, with a membership of four hundred and thirteen, has paid twenty-five hundred dollars in the last two years for the relief of its members, and nothing for strikes. The general secretary writes that the objects of the association are protective and benevolent.

Organized in 1845, experience has taught and disciplined us to the utter futility of strikes when more reasonable means can be resorted to to attain an object sought ; hence we have no strikes or lock-outs.

The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, embracing copper-smiths, brass-finishers, turners, fitters, mill-wrights, smiths, pattern-makers, machine-joiners, plainers, slotters, and borers, has its headquarters in England, but numbers 1809 members in 42 branches in the United States. The entire membership of 51,689 in 432 branches in 1885 was distributed as follows : In England there were three hundred and eight branches ; in Scotland, forty-two ; in Ireland, fourteen ; in Australia, eleven ; in New Zealand, three ; in Queensland, two ; in the East Indies, one ; in Malta, one ; in Canada, seven ; in the United States, forty-two ; in France, one. The benefit features of this strong organization are remarkable. The general secretary thus reported for 1885 :

During the last year we spent no less than £188,277 on our various benefits and other expenses ; the outlay on both being unusually heavy. Now, this is an enormously large sum for any workingmen's organization to disburse, and indicates an amount of mutual trustfulness and self-help which is truly one of the most cheering signs we know of in connection with the history of our order. Yet even this is nothing to what we were called upon to do in 1879. Our expenditure for that year was no less than £245,826 or £57,549 more than last year. Taking the expenditure on benefits only for the last ten years, it falls very little short of one and one-quarter millions of pounds. Surely this is something to be proud of. In times like the present, when special relief funds for the unemployed are the order of the day, it is but right that we should boast of the work we have done in keeping our members from absolute want, and rendering them independent of outside aid or charity.

We will first consider the statistics of the whole society, and then of the American branches. The benefits paid in 1885 were as follows: \$393,345 to those out of work, whose number averaged 3240 during the several weeks of the year; \$154,385 to sick benefits; \$163,040 superannuation benefits; \$9000 accident benefits; \$43,445 funeral and death benefits; \$20,800 benevolent grants to any needing help; \$48,365 strike expenses. It will be noticed that of the above benefits, amounting to \$832,380, the strike expenses were only 5.8 per cent. These benefits averaged \$16.10 per member. Equally significant is the summary for the thirty-five years, 1851-1885 inclusive, during which the membership steadily grew from 11,829 in 1851 to 20,935 in 1860, 34,711 in 1870, 44,692 in 1880, and 51,689 in 1885. During these thirty-five years the benefits were:

To those out of work	\$6,204,365
To the sick	2,777,810
Those too old to work	1,668,215
The injured	220,500
The families of the deceased	866,725
Those needing help	302,870
To assist strikes in this and other trades	418,690
	<hr/>
	\$12,459,175

During all this time the strike expenses were only 3.86 per cent of the whole expenditure.

The purpose of this article requires a more particular consideration of the benefits paid in this country. The sick benefit amounts to three dollars per week for the first twenty-six weeks, and then is graded down with each extra week. The out-of-work benefit is three dollars per week for fourteen weeks, and then is graded down. The travelling benefit is three dollars per week, paid in any town where there is a branch. Seventy-two dollars are paid at death. The strike benefit is three dollars weekly, paid like all the above from the regular dues, and one dollar and fifty cents per week additional from the contingent fund raised by special levy. The dues are thirty cents per week so long as the general reserve fund is not under eighteen dollars per member in the United States, or

fifteen dollars in other countries. When the fund is under these figures, the dues are increased fifteen cents per week till the normal condition of the funds is restored. If a member while following his ordinary duties is maimed so seriously that he cannot earn the average wages of his district, he is, if ten years a member, entitled to three hundred dollars, and if over ten years in the society, to six hundred dollars. On the death of a member his wife is entitled to thirty dollars. A superannuation benefit is paid to those who have been members for a certain number of years and who from physical or mental inability cannot earn the average wages of the district. If a man has been in the society twenty-five years, he receives one dollar and eighty cents per week; if thirty years, two dollars and ten cents; if thirty-five years, two dollars and forty cents; and if forty years, three dollars per week. Appropriations are made from the benevolent fund and donated to members in case of special distress. This fund, like the contingent and accident funds and that for the assistance of other trades, is raised by special assessments. Payment to the benevolent fund is voluntary, but the assessment is always paid. All other levies are compulsory. The dues, during the twelve months ending in March, 1887, have averaged a little over fifty cents a week. The returns for 1885, the latest at command, show that among the American branches there were paid:

To those out of work	\$21,695
To the sick	3,668
Travelling benefits	737
Superannuation benefits	2,393
Funeral benefits	600
Donations to those in distress	1,391
	<hr/>
	\$30,484

Nothing seems to have been spent on strikes.

The National Association of Stationary Engineers, a recently formed union, with a growth in membership in 1886 from 2926 to 3926, reports 273 lectures given to the members and 1410 books added to the association libraries, and the expenditure of \$1785 for the relief of sick, disabled, or unfortunate

brethren. The national secretary justly believes that these facts "are evidence that the order is true to its principles and is doing noble work in the direction of charity and increase of knowledge." One of the chief objects of this union is to secure a proper inspection of boilers and engines and a proper licensing of stationary engineers, in order to prevent the constantly recurring explosions and losses of life caused by the criminal desire of some employers to obtain the cheapest engines and lowest paid employees regardless of safety.

The following table gives the membership and total benefit and strike expenses for 1885 (or 1886, as the case may be) of fourteen unions:

	MEMBERSHIP.	BENEFIT EXPENSES.	STRIKE EXPENSES.
Cigar-makers	25,789	abt. \$98,000.00 ¹	\$32,000.00
Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (Amer. branches) . .	1,127	14,515.02	772.78
Brotherhood of Carpen- ters and Joiners . .	35,421	34,971.64	1,641.80
Locomotive Engineers .	20,000	abt. 300,000.00	—
Locomotive Firemen .	17,000	228,000.00	—
Amalgamated Society of Engineers (American branches)	1,289	30,484.00	—
Stationary Engineers. .	3,926	1,785.00	—
Silk-hatters	413	2,500.00	—
Glass-workers	5,000	9,000.00	40,000.00
Boiler-makers	5,000	5,000.00	3,500.00
Horse-shoers	5,000	not known	300.00
Furniture-workers . .	5,000	abt. 7,000.00	abt. 2,000.00
Iron-moulders	20,000	35,000.00	56,000.00
German-American Typo- graphia	950	6,234.81	2,604.79
14 unions	145,915	\$772,290.47	\$138,819.39

¹ The figures for the year were not at command, and this is merely an estimate on the basis of the official returns for one-fourth of the year.

The strike expenses were only \$17.80 as against each \$100 spent on benefit features, and were probably not over twelve per cent of the entire expenditure of these fourteen unions. In only two of the fourteen unions did the strike equal the benefit expenses. The following seven unions reported that the benefits were under the control of the branches, and no statistics were at hand.

	MEMBERSHIP.
Journeyman Bakers	8,000
Brick-layers and Stone-masons	20,000
Bottle-blowers	1,200
International Typographical Union	30,000
International Association of Plumbers	2,500
National Association of Iron and Steel-workers	20,000
National Federation of Miners and Mine-laborers	20,000
	<hr/>
	101,700

The membership returns are either official or estimated by the national officers. Other unions, like the Switchmen and Granite-cutters, are pledged to entire secrecy. The benefit features of the Knights of Labor are entirely local, save the death benefit. Over ten thousand are now in the relief department, which assesses its members to pay benefits of five hundred to one thousand dollars according to the amount of insurance the member has chosen to carry, on the death or disability of a member. In March and April, 1886, \$4350 were thus paid. As the membership rapidly increased afterward, it is probable that over \$40,000 were thus expended during the year. The National Federation of Miners and Mine-laborers, with about 20,000 members, is too recently organized to have any distinctive benefit features. The great success which has followed its efforts at arbitration has done much to improve the conditions of labor in the mines, but its consideration is not within the scope of this article. Many of our unions, through their local branches, pay large sums for relief which do not come at all under the cognizance of the national body. Thus the International Union of Brick-layers and Stone-cutters, which, with its 20,000 members, has spent \$30,000 in strikes within the last three years, has probably

spent as much, or more, in benefit features; but these being entirely under the control of the subordinate unions, no figures can be given. Other unions, like that of the Bottle-blowers with a membership of 1200, which have no formulated scheme of benefits, bury their members decently and relieve those in distress. The International Typographical Union, with about 30,000 members, has recently organized a relief department. Its membership is small, but growing rapidly. For a long time, however, all the local branches have been caring most effectually for their own members. As an example, may be mentioned the Chicago Typographical Union No. 16, with 1400 members during the year ending May 1, 1886. The constitution of this "local" provides that seventy-five per cent of the dues, together with the total receipts from all other sources, shall be known as the "general fund," and of this amount five per cent shall be set apart as a fund for keeping the cemetery lots in repair and providing for their adornment, and five per cent shall be set aside "as a fund for the relief of worthy sick and destitute members, to be expended under the direction of the relief committee." A large proportion of this general fund is devoted to benefit features, according to the needs of the members. The secretary of the International Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Steam-fitters and Gas-fitters writes :

The relief department of this organization is conducted by each local association according to its own views, and consequently I have but little knowledge of the amounts used in this way. The membership of the International Association is at the present time 2500. We are spreading rapidly, and by the first of May will number at least 3000. Our lines extend from Boston to Omaha. The cost of maintaining thirty strikes last year was \$2500, — twenty-four of which were successful, four were failures, and two compromised at small advantages. We are now organized so thoroughly that strikes are not expected; and if they do occur, will not last long. We are maintaining a co-operative plumbing company at the city of Milwaukee, which is self-supporting, and which we hope soon to make a paying investment.

Although the above figures cover the organized benefit features of about a million men, they by no means cover all the

work of the kind performed by the labor organizations to which these men belong, and least of all do they give any adequate idea of the aggregate work of relief and mutual help of these unions. In the course of a recent somewhat extended investigation of co-operation in New England and the Middle states, it fell to my lot to visit the headquarters of many of the divisions of organized labor, and great was my surprise to find the extent to which they were assisting the needy and finding work for the unemployed. The writer had a good illustration of the working of the employment bureau, which is fast assuming prominence in the best unions, when visiting the headquarters of the Chicago Typographical Union No. 16, in March, 1887. The head of a large printing and engraving company in Chicago called to get a competent engraver. The secretary of the "local" could recommend but two men, and was not positive that either would be entirely competent for the difficult work required, but promised to send them to the company at once on trial. Many members called to see if any one had applied for their services, and others to report how they were succeeding in the places to which they had been sent—valuable work this! and the faults of unions that do this kind of service to the community may be looked on with considerable charity. At the headquarters likewise of the Brass-workers' Union in New York City, I observed that those in search of work reported their address and the kind of work in brass that they were best fitted for. Employers come here for help of any particular grade: workmen need not stand about street corners waiting for work, or tramp the city in search of it, or incur expense for advertising, and the employers are saved much annoyance. The oversight of this employment bureau and of relief to the destitute seemed one of the chief occupations of the much, and in some cases, no doubt, justly, derided "walking delegate." In Minneapolis, fifteen hundred miles away from New York, the same thing was observed. It was the testimony there of a competent and unbiassed authority, that the Knights of Labor and the other labor organizations rarely failed to succor the needy or procure work for the

unemployed of their members, and even in many cases for unorganized labor. It is not within the province of this article to do more than call attention to the self-evident fact that by furnishing an opportunity for social relaxation in the rooms of the unions, which are almost always open, the great temptation to linger about our saloons and low resorts loses much of its power. Not only is temperance promoted, but the mutual distrust of the individual workmen is removed, and they are thus prepared for all those forms of intelligent co-operation by which higher forms of industrial action are made possible. Far be it from me to defend many of the reckless, ill-judged actions of some of our labor organizations. Organization of any kind is simply a weapon. Whether it shall be a benefit or a curse depends upon the intelligence of the members. They, and not the organization, are responsible for abuses. In a large measure also the rest of society is responsible for allowing such ignorance and lack of wise training among us as to render these abuses possible. Danton was right when he said: "If you suffer the poor to grow up as animals, they may chance to become wild beasts and rend you."

But the facts cited in this article are encouraging as showing the way in which the good is replacing the bad in the ranks of united labor. The experience of England gives good ground to expect that with the growth of our labor organizations most of their abuses will disappear and conservatism become the rule. In 1880 the special agents of the United States Census were able to report national benefit features in only five unions, whose 13,032 members spent \$53,843.83 in the various forms of relief. What a contrast to the expenditure now reported of fourteen times as much among fourteen unions which embrace eleven times as many members, to say nothing of the vast extent of the system of benefits among the local branches of these and other large labor organizations! The time seems surely approaching when American labor organizations will resemble the British, seven of the largest of which spent only two per cent of their income in 1882 on strikes, and only eight per cent during the previous six years of depression.

EDWARD W. BEMIS.